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Falling in Faith

this will be the poem of great confusion
a soft stepped entry into the world of touchy feely
but so aware of it that the I shatters things quickly
I can’t fathom
I can’t tolerate
but I have a rhinoceros bearing full bore
on what it is constipates our epoch
you and I must rise
thanks to the leavening in the warmed and wetted flour
to feel the dank wind
the steady breeze that’s lost its mind
blowing through this city
onto my face
this nice city
I will crouch and hold this pose
a flickering wild light from my eyes
illuminates the inner shebang
a space cushioned in velvet trompe l’oeil
in verity its edges are very far away
entering means falling
falling intuits faith
otherwise
you and I will have to start
all over again
feetfirst

Love or Confusion

My ceaseless love for you finally
blew its gasket
something cellular and mental
without form
there is no form
logical sequence out the window
none of this thinking works
the old tulle curtain
moves fitfully
in a 19th century breeze
there is a large white hole
in my being
but no pain…
the kick in the head
from a boot worn by Hermes
with little wings flapping
at the malleolus
a lineup of my ethereal selves
xxis staggered
was it love or
simply delusion
or Hendrix's
confusion?
And the gross and sobering
truth
has me believe
the woman I have been in love with
all this time
is none other than
my mother
        I've never left home
not because she was a spectacular success
        at mothering
but rather where she failed
in giving tender and uncritical
love
something she never received
a story as old as desperation
don't just care for me damn it
gimme some of that uncritical
love
there she failed
it creased me deeply
those folds hiding me
from being seeable

mother

I can see it in your eyes
I can feel it from your fingertips
that you just can’t provide
it’s not there

and I wish to summon you
you who have been gone these 19 years
For I humbly open myself
to your god bespoken essence
it do love me
let it love me
quintessentially
please
as I do you

Paris by night (pour Pali)

insalubrious has a lovely sound and yet it describes uncleanliness which is ever so slightly less lovely since we know sound and meaning and the pleasanter things in life do not always share consonance sounds to either shiver your timbers or leave a fine taste in your mouth while eclectic has a disturbing twinge too close to electric which as in chair is the parting shot yes take that one it has a final ring to it and you wouldn't take the sound 'shot' for a beginning and yet that gets the race off the one race you win and lose at the end because you are alone there at the stopping blocks it's death you see good old death though this is little more than an interpretation having myself been there with death while it carried off those close to and loved by me carried off I don't know but it does seem as Isocrates the grump said that when death is there you're not except that I have misremembered and it was Epicurus just the sort of quaint and unhelpful thing he would have said here now at 10:30 pm they've turned on the street lights sunset was a success and one cat lies on the pillow on the porch considering the minutiae of cat existence this being a guess of course and we must take so much happenstance under our benevolent wing and lightly guess from whence it arose It's almost eleven but here in Paris six days after the longest night of the year the sky towards sunset is still alight a question arises as to how this is for you indeed a word students overuse I wrote this thinking of you in a hidden and neutral sort of way you see it's not connected to anything I can yet name and meanwhile an American woman's voice drones on because its intonation cuts through the night tumbling out her open window into my ears while the cat has closed its eyes "I feel like she's not a bug" I hear her say and this is my embroidering for she surely said "above" but it's the times and dehumanizing is going full swing and memories of our dear Gregor Samsa fill my mind as an electric bike speeds by sounding just like a hand mixer and Lord is she loud and surely on the telephone and I will not end here in our mostly tame forest of the city where the murmurs rise treble free tv and radio voices short laughs and the click of a front door being opened and a tap as it shuts a car starts up and my American drones on and two men two buildings distant sit with their backs against the window railings three storeys up and she just said oh my God and shouldn't it be our God because God needs more than one of us otherwise it sounds as if you are amplifying your ego imagining leading God around on a leash like a well trained cat meanwhile the cat my cat has its eyes closed and is staring in my direction sunset's done we cannot distinguish a glow on the horizon from light pollution and here comes the noisy whir of a scooter as I fold up shop for the night.

A story of cruelty

I don’t know
so let me begin
this history of cruelty
will be long
and for some
rapturous in places
        less so for others
not celebrating
        but giving
a stage to imagine
peopled by the aware and the unconscious

nature, out there, is rudely efficient.
In here as well
every swelling in and on your body
attests

Microorganisms go at it
from virus to amoeba to
bacteria of every dimension
submicroscopic up to the
        Thiomargarita magnifica
a bacterium averaging 10mm **gigantic**
millions of times larger than your everyday bacteria
        it does good things to the soil
from our POV
It can’t be cruel
Elvis did not croon
        with Thiomargarita in mind

Really none of this has anything
to do with cruelty
we need an ingredient
the microbial world will never have
        intention.

Deviant knowledge coupled with
selfishness
but
what is selfish microbes
viruses? Dead or alive, neutral opportunistic
a very human perspective

Things seen look swift, brutal and cruel
a larger fish chomping a smaller
frogs spitting out poison beetles
lions mauling antelopes and hyenas

a heron impaling a fish

all species in every direction
pouncing and nibbling
eat or be eaten
it's not to be thought about

I don't see cruelty in microbes
I don't see a world of microbial torture

I muddle and hope for clarity
to ace my chief feature
fear
it immobilizes me
when it has free rein
unnecessary
but omnipresent
not omnipotent

one of our cats is dying of a cruel cancer
it's cruel for her seen from where I sit
she lies flat in the hall
breathing faster
than cat normal

it is cruel for us because we love her
but the cancer the lymphoma
can't be called cruel
it does not even follow
the eat or be eaten
scenario
nothing eats it other than itself
it dies once it's killed its host
cruel fate, cruel disease

would life be less cruel if it ended peaceably
Or not at all?

Is obvious destruction:
        a ruptured dam
        a military invasion
                of very cruel soldiers
raping, pillaging and torturing
and murdering of course,
        are their acts under cover of war
cruel?

A child
whose parents and siblings know is special
more artistic, intelligent, old souled

and outside the pattern
everything for which they cannot pardon her for
sparking abuse and torture
they don't cotton for themselves
to return that errant soul
to normalcy
the Jew
to the cross
the Black man and woman
to servility
the child to crushed and mute
acceptance

My body lets me know
when a cruel thrill is taking over
a rictus in the cheeks
a twisted smile to my eyes
and a small lean forward as my hands
go pincer-like
to enact their meddling cruelty

minor stuff but if cruelty is the juice
I have just the instant I need
to plop its urge elsewhere
and enliven a healthier me

big time cruelty from those with power
blaming the poor, expelling the weak
enrolling the ignorant
  is on another scale
still none of this is coming close
to where I feel
I wish to go

this is not reaching
that 85% of nothingness
from which of course
everything emerges

I wonder about sound
right here the noise
we associate with states
of silence in cruelty

when it all started
that initial big bang of cruelty
officially disguised
as the real one
whose joy was smothered
deliberately

in this act of mis-creation
a massive vomit of Schadenfreude
from God?
Too simple,
puts cruelty on a pinnacle
so
did cruelty slither in with Lucifer's
        I will not serve?
God's finest
understood the role
It had been given
        unlimited Free Will
and other tasty tidbits such as
inventing judgment as It went along
but
It honed Its genius in entrapment
in feeding mortals hope
the way French farmers force-feed geese
and ducks
to make foie gras
fattening our hope-livers
 while the bathysphere of hope
descends us through the abyss
and has us step outside
where the pressure per square centimeter
crushes us to tinfoil

reality is non-negotiable
but there are so many good things
        you will say
yes
I'm not trying to rid the world of anything
just angling for a grip
on cruelty
so goes my fear
        it contracts
and births at least one form of nastiness
cruelty from acts of precipitation
brusque impatience
cortisol induced brute-being
wanting to be quick and free of it
kindness is not well done
        in acceleration

I suspect I wish to expel
the germ of cruelty
from my innards
is it then an infection
to the world?

I see the rush of water
an immense wildwater flowing
called the current
of life
and in it
a human adjunct
an unnatural flow
grafted into the gorgeous maelstrom
a putrid orange-yellow
rivulet
of deliberate derangement
and abuse
the meander of cruelty
unnecessary but ingrained to a point
of finality

It's in Les Liaisons Dangereuses
it's solvent in literature, film
can be shown on a canvas
on a face
through a smirk
but cannot be memorialized
no?

There are no fossil specimens
archeological signposts
however
a great many social conventions
from corsets to ripping out the heart
of your prisoners
and offering them to Huitzilopochtli
the Mexica hummingbird God of the Sun
and war
seem cruel, senselessly cruel
sang Lou Reed about the girls
who mistreated him in adolescence
        is there a sensibly cruel way to be?

Am I getting closer
to the townhouse of cruelty
the isle it inhabits
its portion of antimatter
bringing it close to violence
as something easier to identify
        but it's broader than that

a savory spice you add to the brew
that wafts above
still recognizable
throughout the cooking

saffron turmeric rose cumin
or ras el hanout
that combines them all
something that comes after
showing you cannot pull away
a path arises
        deal artfully
and kindly
with whatever displeases you.

Is it a form of negligence
when you succumb to the parade
of baser instincts
ever ready to wave your flag

this morning
a handle to the word appeared
        cruelty is deliberately getting in the way
of someone else's happiness

we have a good feel for what
disturbs anyone else
above all those we know
and a glance, a remark
a deceleration in what we're doing
knowingly impacting the other
is a common and insidious show
of the laziness
with which we treat life
and the disrespect we show for it
        in others
especially those we pretend
to love
fed in annoyance, sarcasm,
and other ill embodied
sentiment

cruelty is ours to create
it's a spawn of free will
and too much or little time
rather no feel for time at all

my mild definition needs amplification
snuff someone's joy
you free yourself
from being close to
yourself
your existence as a burden
bleat it
dump it

cruelty as gleeful release
from me
I've come closer to a glimpse
of cruelty I'm on the lookout for
dawn sunbeams sparkle dew drops
in the ferns
a veil of protection
against my exercising
cruelty
it won't be any sturdier than that.
(9 mins)

If everyone was…

If everyone were rich, there wouldn’t be any rich people,
if everyone were poor, there wouldn’t be any poor people,
if everyone were stupid, there wouldn’t be any stupid people,
and, if everyone was smart, you got it, there wouldn’t be any
smart people.
If everyone was a lizard, there wouldn’t be any lizards,
If we were all heroes, there would be no heroes,
If we were all mediocre, there would be no mediocrity,
If we were all politicians, we would still all be politicians,
If we were all arctic explorers, we would all be arctic explorers
and the poles would crumble under our weight,
If we were all overweight, none of us would be overweight,
If we were all making funny airplane noises, none of us
would be making funny airplane noises,
if we were all mothers then time would stop,
if we were all snails, time would pick up again, but slowly
If we were all Hindu Gods, would we worship each other?
If we were all doctors, would anyone dare get sick?
If we were always asking questions, they wouldn’t be questions,
If were all Black, there wouldn’t be any Negroes,
If we were all Jews, there wouldn’t be any antisemitism,
If we were all happy, why is that so unimaginable?
If we were all just an experiment, who writes up the conclusions?
If we all hit rock bottom, wouldn’t we all do well to stay there a while?
If we were all the same, we wouldn’t exist,
If we were all open to wonderment, wouldn’t that make our day?
If we were all consumed in love, wouldn’t that leave the Gods nothing to complain about?
If we were all moved to silence, wouldn’t that recreate the universe?
Well?

Don’t do away with Gods!

When the Romans tried to do away with the temples to Isis and Serapis around 2000 years ago they regretted it.
Soon temples to the divine lady appeared on the outskirts of Rome while Serapis was becoming a fertility God unto his own. The people refused state imposed religion, they hated being boxed in and they loved their rituals from way back. The people had their ways and the new state religion was not that old time religion and it lacked juice and it lacked love of the land and squeezing those clumps of earth between your fingers and just being unhampered and today we can’t do any of this...we cannot go against the state religion and make our temples, even our little temples in the suburbs, there is no sacred now, the state religion is bland and featureless but it rules our roost. I don’t mean evangelical idiocy. Going shopping for food and taking the metro to a movie, or walking by the canal are not old time religion. Nor the cut of your clothes, and whether the brand you bought 20 years ago now lasts three times less. You keep thinking of that damn Second Coming by Yeats, the center not holding and all that, the second law of thermodynamics, things falling apart because nothing has the energy to stay together anymore or be a ritual. When I watch the kids at the primary school at recess from a second story window in the building I’m teaching in I don’t think they’re building mini temples to Isis or other worthy female Gods, but they are moving like pollen in a glass of water, Brownian Movement, the atoms underneath driving their dance, no list of dreary edicts telling them how much rent and a bottle of water cost. The screaming and vital hubbub are precious and beyond words. Where does that energy go? Far from us adults. Could they be encouraged to summon the Gods of yore? As part of a game? Shaman charged hopscotch? Change our adult world, or give a boost of something chthonic, infuse our deadened stares with an occasional spark of recognition; not in name but of essence. Get those kids over here, let them play, let us ask how much order we can sacrifice and not endanger them,

This Poem

This poem is being written with purely lucrative intent, each couplet, every absence of rhyme, surprising consonance preparing the reader for damned and sublime revelations! All juries will fall on their faces rushing to proclaim its brilliance, its shaded and recondite appeal and other equally incomprehensible virtues. It will twang the heart strings of the hardened cynic, draw nods from the tenured sceptic, cause Putin to stop plotting, Biden to stop bleating. It will brush by your awareness like dandylion fluff on a summer breeze, it will open your eyes to the unspeakable beauty of your wife's smile or the vista into a sunrise valley that looks unspoiled in the glare of our fiery star. Countless beings not just human, will discover a love of the iamb from simply this poem being read out loud. A stunning pall of empathy will seize every able body and shake them by their several shoulders, shake them until all sense is laid to rest, blinded in the amber honey glow of serious bliss percolating from the consonantal hubbub in every line of this poem. Angels whoopee with terrifying joy, dancing on the heads of every freestanding pin since the very first pin was there to dance on. Newly visible nebulae open their spiral arms and revel in the deathless and incandescent marvel of this verse, Magnates blanch, potentates fall to their knees, kingpins come unhinged faced with the vibratory maelstrom of this poem, gold pieces materialize in beaming appreciation, the crowds dance a frenzied hora, peace and war and dreams of immortality wither and fade in the transcendental magnificence of this poem.
Can you believe it?

Tadao Ando

Tadao Ando draws light in, it bows before
angling off to the left, where it seems to
create a dewdrop the size of a date palm in
your hands, its light shapes a shifting brilliance
of water reflected on aluminum walls and
out slips water fowl into a bed of green and
glittering water lilies, blinding bead-sized
crystals of light, their rays outline a moving
horizon and escape slowly into a cornice put
there to lure in those few beams still asleep
while the sun rose, they scurry in, find Helios
in his chariot, meld with the fiery rest of a
pulsing gentle ball of now creamy light, filling
the space here with several mythological cats
who shake their lion manes splattering tiny
chariots of more light, this shine shimmies up
columns put there to charm the moon whose
blind white light steps down into the now quiet
space. There is no if, Gods are there, comparing
lightning bolts, wondering at the workmanship,
they roil just at the limit of a boil, and soften with
the light coming in from a peony, whose bright
green leaves suffuse the pink with a trombone
yellow. The light is now ripe to pick and borealis
like hangs there in the air far enough away to
remain elegant. The observer has long since been
overwhelmed, but Tadao Ando remembers all
these essentials, in a corner of his galaxy.